

Where do you think the sidewalk ends?

Recently I ran across a press release announcing a contest sponsored by the Children's Bookmark, a chain of stores specializing in children's literature. The theme revolves around a book by Shel Silverstein entitled "Where the Sidewalk Ends." Contestants are asked to submit their interpretation of where the sidewalk ends.

Unfortunately for us older kids, the contest is open only to children up to the sixth grade.

So instead of entering the contest, I decided to take a survey of where adults think the sidewalk ends.

The release said Silverstein's poetry book for children has become a "publishing phenomenon." But I'll let you in on a secret. I went out and bought a copy. It's great — especially for those who know that deep inside every grouchy adult is a happy

child fighting to get out.

I've always been a big advocate of keeping young in body and mind, and such exercises as contemplating where the sidewalk ends do contribute toward that goal.

FOR INSTANCE, I've always been able to see the Snuffleupagus — you know, that Sesame Street character that only children can see. If you're an adult and can see the Snuffleupagus, it means you're young at heart. If you don't even know who the Snuffle is, it means you've fallen over the precipice into a ravine of cynicism.

The survey revealed that many of my adult colleagues, indeed, have gone over the edge.

The first adult I queried answered that the side-

walk ends at the gutter. Now *there* is a confirmed cynic. Another answered quickly that it ended in the grave. But there was some hope. After a moment's hesitation she said, "Well, I wanted to answer heaven, but I don't believe in heaven anymore."

A friend of many years standing couldn't even believe I asked the question.

"I guess it just goes around the block and never ends," he finally answered. Now that's a man in a rut.

But there were those who showed some hope.

"Las Vegas, of course," one spirited adult answered. Well, that's not exactly Fantasyland. But it'll do.

"It ends at the pot of gold," said another. She explained that to get to the end of the rainbow, you must walk along to the end of the sidewalk. I won-

der if she was talking about the yellow brick road?

MY FAVORITE was from Southfield Eccentric editor Carl Stoddard.

"It ends where the houses are farther apart, the air smells fresher and you can feel the wind in your face," he said.

Another colleague, Ron Garbinski, answered, "It ends at the end of my tangent when there are no more tangents to go."

Where does my sidewalk end? That's easy. It ends on the shore of Grand Traverse Bay where someday I'll own a home with a sundeck where I'll write great books, smoke my pipe, watch the sun go down and listen to the seagulls.

Where does your sidewalk end?

— STEVE BARNABY



Nick Sharkey

A marriage class taught the veterans

1. Fighting between a husband and wife is good and healthy.
2. There are one or two things about my spouse that I'd like to change.
3. To be in love means you give 50 percent of yourself to your spouse.
4. It isn't necessary to say "I love you" very often. My spouse knows I love him/her.

Social agencies such as Family Focus in Birmingham estimate that perhaps as many as one in every two marriages in some suburban communities end in divorce. The statistics are so staggering that no one is sure of the exact divorce rate. But it's not good.

Obviously, institutions and agencies concerned about the future of married life are worried. Most are taking some action. For example, the Catholic Church in the Detroit archdiocese recently started requiring engaged couples to wait at least six months before marriage.

MOST CHURCHES ask that engaged couples participate in formal premarriage instruction. During the past two weeks I was part of a team helping prepare seven couples for marriage. The statements at the beginning of this column were among the topics considered.

During the program couples met three evenings within eight days. They considered many subjects, including communication, money management, sexuality, birth control and fidelity.

The program required that every couple discuss these subjects in private. They could not merely listen to a speaker in a lecture-style class, but had to actively discuss their differing views on important subjects. Hopefully, after this, they began to understand each other a little better.

Speakers stressed that no one ever has completed the job when it comes to making a good marriage successful. If one partner begins to become satisfied, then the troubles begin. Marriage is a never-ending struggle of growing together.

One speaker, a lawyer, brought his legal background into the class. Marriage cannot be considered a contract in the sense of, "If you give so much, then I'll give so much," he said. "But it's a commitment to continue to give no matter what is returned."

It's easy to fall into the "contract" trap.

A PREMARRIAGE class brings back many memories. One groom-to-be was asked where he'd go on his honeymoon. "It will depend on how much money I'm given from those coming to the wedding," he answered.

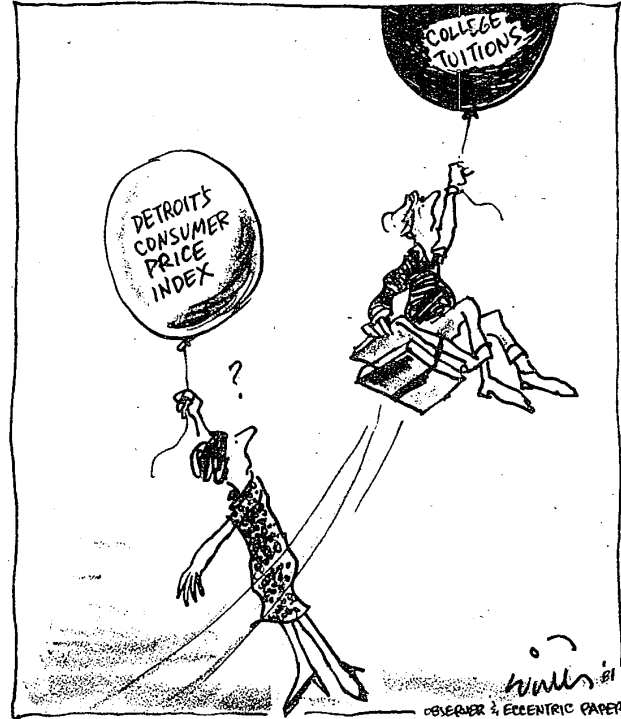
This former groom recalled keeping a running total of the money he was given in little white envelopes at his wedding reception. The total would determine which direction his car would head for his honeymoon.

But mostly the class reminded again that it takes hard work to make a good marriage succeed. That's easy to forget. In this class the teachers may have learned more than the students.



discover Michigan
Bill Stockwell

Did you know that the Wayne County clerk's office issues some 21,000 marriage licenses a year? It sells 13,000 birth certificates and nearly 9,000 death certificates. It also issues more than 4,000 gun permits and accepts more than 41,000 civil court cases.



58th opening game

Ghosts on the diamond

Unless the weather interferes, it will be another happy day for The Stroller as he continues his jaunt along the journalistic trail.

It will be the 58th anniversary of one of the greatest thrills of his life.

Back in April of 1924, he was accepted as a member of the Baseball Writers Association of America, earning the right to sit in the press box at the then Navin Field and watch the Tigers' opening game.

Many times as a young reporter, he attended baseball games in Philadelphia, the nearest major league city to his home town, and virtually envied the fellows sitting in the press box. And just as often he dreamed of the day when, with some good fortune, he, too, could carry a small typewriter into the haven of the writers and "cover" a major league game.

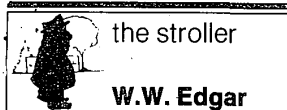
THE GOOD fortune came unexpectedly, when he had a chance meeting with Edgar A. Guest, the famed Detroit Free Press poet, who invited him to join the staff.

It was almost like a gift from heaven when, a few days before the Tiger opener, the sports editor, the late Harry Bullion, handed him a card with his name engraved on it that officially made him a member of the Baseball Writers Association and gave him a seat in the press box.

No happier fellow ever lived than The Stroller that day when he was ushered into the writers' headquarters high up in the stands, there to sit with several of the best baseball writers of the day.

When The Stroller visits the old place — known now as Tiger Stadium to baseball fans — he will relive the moment all over again. But this time, he will be visiting with the ghosts of 1924. Gone are Bullion, the famed H. G. Salsinger, and E. A. Batchelor — but their ghosts will be with him all afternoon.

And as he looks down from that post on high, he will see again the bald pate of Frank J. Navin, the



the stroller

W.W. Edgar

owner of the Tigers in those days, and one of the shrewdest of all baseball club owners.

AND OUT on the field he'll see the ghost of Ty Cobb, then manager, walking to the batter's box carrying three bats and defying the pitcher to strike him out.

There'll be other ghosts — Hookie Daus, the great pitcher, Lu Blue, one of the fanciest first basemen ever, Del Pratt at second base, Topper Rigney at shortstop, and Bobby Jones at third base.

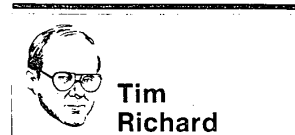
In the outfield The Stroller will see Bobby Veach, one of the great characters in Tiger history, along with Johnny Bassler, one of the most popular of all Tiger catchers.

What a lineup that was, and the memory of those players has lived with The Stroller all these years. In fact, that day marked the start of a record of which The Stroller is quite proud.

He hasn't missed a Tiger opener since that memorable day. This will be his 58th consecutive inaugural, and it is claimed to be a record for members of the Baseball Writers Association.

THROUGH ALL these years, he has watched the parade of stars — Charlie Gehringer, Hank Greenberg, Schoolboy Rowe, Tommy Bridges, Mickey Cochrane, George Kell and the 1968 World Champions that boasted Al Kaline and Denny McLain.

But as he sits high in the press box this afternoon, he will relive the day he became a member of the Baseball Writers Association, which has now honored him with a gold lifetime pass to any baseball park in the land.



Tim Richard

Tuitions head in the wrong direction

Mention "government revenue" and John Q. Citizen jumps immediately to the conclusion you're talking about taxes.

Yet one of the highest growth areas of government revenue is non-tax charges. Residents of the Oakland Community College and Schoolcraft College districts will learn this the hard way when tuitions go up this August.

At OCC, resident tuition is \$16 a credit hour, and college officials are contemplating a \$2 hike.

At Schoolcraft, resident tuition is \$18.50, and they are pondering a \$3.50 increase. Even if the board of trustees shaves it to \$2, the jolt is still pretty hefty.

If you think such increases are a bad thing, well, we tried to warn you back in 1978 when the so-called Headlee Amendment was being proposed. Headlee put some limits on tax growth but not on non-tax revenues. Tuition, lab fees, building permits, the zillions of licenses government issues — all are non-tax revenues, and none is limited by the Headlee tax limitation amendment.

A CASE CAN be made for hiking non-tax revenues.

The biggest cost of going to college isn't tuition. It's the income students give up through the inability to hold a genuinely good, full-time job. It's also the cost of room and board.

For students attending a commuter college like OCC, Schoolcraft or University of Michigan-Dearborn, a major cost is a car. They tell me the reason so many students hold part-time jobs is to support their cars.

There is also a theory that people who use government services should pay for them. If only half or fewer of our high school graduates go on to college, the thinking goes, then why should everybody pay high taxes for colleges? Charge big tuitions.

The reasoning fails to impress me. If government is to perform a service, it is usually because private enterprise can't. That's why we now have municipal fire departments instead of private fire companies, why we have a system of public education instead of all private schools, why we have public parks instead of private parks, why we have public freeways instead of private toll roads.

My gut instinct is to favor the lowest possible tuitions and fees. Besides, the system of earmarking user revenues for a particular purpose simply doesn't work. Ask anyone who uses county roads.

THE BUREAU of Post-Secondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education tosses out some interesting numbers on inflation in colleges.

Let's say you assign an index number of 100 to the cost of higher education in 1972. Well, today the cost is 200. That's a 100 percent increase. Even the consumer price index hasn't soared that much. There is a pretty wild inflation in college costs.

Meanwhile, the folks in the Michigan Legislature are looking over the shoulders of our good old local community college trustees and telling them in effect to raise tuitions.

Oh, it's not crass dictatorship. Rather, what the lawmakers do is to rig the state aid formula so that local colleges can't afford not to raise tuitions to a level the state thinks is appropriate. It appears the state is thinking tuition ought to be 25 percent of total revenue or so.

The bottom line is that if college costs are going to soar, and if tuitions are going to be tied to college costs, then tuitions are going to soar.

That's the wrong direction to go for our system of higher education.